

**An Archaeological Survey
And Site Assessment at North Pointe Subdivision,
Bexar County, Texas**

By

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ABSTRACT

In January 2005, Abasolo Archaeological Consultants conducted an archeological survey and site assessment of 41BX106 for Frost GeoSciences and the City of San Antonio. The work was carried out to assess the significance of that portion of this previously recorded site that lies within the boundary of the North Pointe Subdivision. The assessment consisted of intensive surface inspection in the site area. A pristine burned rock midden with a natural central depression was located at 41BX106, approximately 80 meters outside the property boundary. The burned rock midden is the only part of the site that has contextual integrity and will not be directly impacted by the development. During the course of the survey, two other known sites, 41BX109 and 41BX113, whose boundaries extend into the North Pointe Subdivision property, were also re-inspected. Neither site contained information significant enough to warrant further investigation.

INTRODUCTION AND MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

An archeological assessment of 41BX106 was conducted by Abasolo Archaeological Consultants (AAC) on January 18, 2005 at the request of Frost Geosciences. The survey team included Harry J. Shafer, Steve Frost and John Frost. The purpose of the survey was to locate 41BX106 with regards to the North Pointe Subdivision development boundary, ascertain its eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places, and determine if the development would have a significant impact on the site. The site's initial documentation was during a survey of the proposed Encino Park Development, published by McGraw et al. (1977). Data from that survey are housed at the Center for Archaeological Research, The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA-CAR).

The 41BX106 area is an oak-juniper parkland with dense stands of juniper, bordered by open spaces of exposed limestone and patches of soil which support thin grass cover. The surface of the knoll where the site was recorded is mostly exposed bedrock. We found the surface to be at up to 50 percent exposed limestone bedrock with very shallow soils typical of the Tarrant Series soils association (Taylor et al., 1991: 30). Using maps generated by Steve Frost and a hand-held GPS unit, we first identified the approximate boundaries of the development property and searched for archaeological evidence

associated with 41BX106 (Fig. 1). An occasional flake presented the only sign of prehistoric cultural activity on the development property.

During the course of the survey inspection, two other previously recorded sites were examined, 41BX109 and 41BX113 which also lie partly within North Pointe Subdivision boundaries. Both 41BX109 and 41BX113 are recorded as "lithic scatters," (McGraw et al. 1977), justly so because of the local outcrop of excellent quality Edwards chert and the extensive ancient procurement activities in this area (e.g., Katz 1987). There is more to 41BX109, however than a lithic scatter. A large burned rock midden was located on the southern boundary of the site. This midden was not recorded in the 1977 survey and a more formal description is provided below.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Site 41BX106 is located along the southern edge of the Balcones Escarpment. As noted earlier, the site was found during the survey of the Encino Park area (McGraw et al. 1977). In addition to the other sites found at Encino Park, at least three major sites are nearby. To the south-southwest are 41BX749, 41BX758, and 41BX695. The first two are within the Stone Oak residential development west of US 281. BX749 is a large dome-shaped burned rock midden within an area of extensive occupation. Joe Labadie (notes on file, UTSA CAR) notes the presence of Angostura, Pedernales, Montell and Scallorn projectile points. Labadie (ibid.) also recorded 41BX758, a site within which three deflated and vandalized burned rock middens were found. 41BX695 is to the north of 41BX106. It was recorded by avocational archaeologists in 1985, who noted two burned rock middens. There are many other sites along the edge of the Escarpment, north of FM1604. Site types include burned rock middens, occupation sites on terraces, and lithic procurement sites (Hester 1974; Brown et al. 1977). Most of the burned rock middens have been destroyed by housing developments and by artifact-digging.

Within the Encino Park area, McGraw et al. (1977) recorded 34 sites, and several others were subsequently documented by I. Wayne Cox (records on file, UTSA CAR). These include burned rock middens like 41BX106, occupation sites dominated by Early Archaic diagnostics (as well as some Middle Archaic types), and lithic procurement areas (variously called "quarries" or "workshops"). As noted below, the re-survey of 41BX106 led to an expanded and more detailed site description; this further strengthens the original recommendation for additional research.

East of 41BX106, there was a major survey and excavation at a Soil Conservation Service floodwater retarding structure (13A; see Hester 1974). The work has been published by Katz (1987), focusing on the major excavations at site 41BX300. This was a long-lived occupation locale, dating from Early Archaic through Late Prehistoric times. Nearby is 41BX301, a lithic procurement site where cobbles of chert were exposed in the limestone hill slope.

Based on the surveys and studies noted here, as well as other work along the southern edge of the Edwards Plateau, a fairly comprehensive archaeological sequence has been

defined (see Hester 1986; Collins et al. 2003). The sequence corresponds to the well-known and often published framework that includes: **Paleoindian** (11,500-8,800 years ago), **Archaic** (8,800-1,500 years ago; divided into several subperiods), **Late Prehistoric** (1,500- 300 years ago), and the **Historic** (arrival of Spanish settlements after A.D. 1700). Our present guess is that 41BX106 was formed during Archaic times, although the use of burned rock middens continued at some sites into the early part of the Late Prehistoric.

SURVEY RESULTS

41BX106

The survey party walked the area of 41BX106 and located the burned rock midden reported to be on the site (Fig. 2; McGraw et al. 1977). The site area is a oak juniper parkland, densely wooded in parts with open paths between clumps of trees. The karstic surface was mostly exposed bedrock limestone with patches of shallow soils that supported upland grasses. The burned rock midden was located on a slight rise created by a small rock outcrop. The midden is pristine with no evidence of vandalism. It measures approximately 15 meters northeast-southwest and approximately 10 meters northwest-southeast. The central depression is about 16-20 meters across and about 30-40 cm at the deepest point.

A suspicious rock alignment is located on the northeast side of the midden composed of large limestone cobbles and small boulders (Fig. 3). The alignment extends northeastward away from the midden. This may be a natural feature, but at right angles to the alignment is another line of cobbles (Fig. 4). This linear arrangement is even more suspicious. These features certainly need to be given more attention if the midden is investigated. Surface inspection around the midden revealed a thin surface scatter of flakes and one thinned biface fragment. No other features were observed at 41BX106.

41BX109

Initially recorded (McGraw et al. 1977) as a lithic scatter, 41BX109 is a rather extensive scatter of lithic debitage resulting mostly from quarrying a local outcrop of excellent quality Edwards chert. The survey party observed an extensive (albeit not intensive) scatter of quarried lithic debris including flakes, cores, and ruined blanks. Not recorded in the original survey, however, is a burned rock midden on the southern extent of the site as the slope increases near a relatively deep draw. The slope at the site is about five to ten percent. The midden is located in the only area of the site with soils deeper than 10 cm.

The burned rock midden at 41BX109 measures approximately 20 meters east-west and 12 meters north-south. It is at least 50 cm thick. A large pothole approximately 9 meters by 6 meters removed about one-third of the midden.

The burned rock midden is included within the boundaries of 41BX109 because of the continuous scatter of chipped stone debris from the midden upslope following the chert outcrop. GPS coordinates taken on the site by Steve Frost indicates that midden lies on the adjoining property and is about 100 meters west of the North Pointe Subdivision property and on the adjacent church property. No additional investigations of that portion of 41BX109 that lies on the subdivision property are warranted (see also McGraw 1977).

41BX113

This site, like 41BX109, was described as a lithic scatter. This is another area of the local landscape in which a fine quality of Edwards chert outcrops. Some evidence of quarrying was observed by the survey party, but no concentrations or other features were observed. No additional investigations are warranted (see also McGraw 1977).

ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

No further archeological investigations are warranted for 41BX106 with regards to North Pointe Subdivision development. The burned rock midden is the only feature at the site that has contextual integrity and that would otherwise warrant additional investigations lies on the adjacent property to the south. North Point Subdivision will not have an adverse impact on 41BX106. However, when development affects the site area at a later date, a testing phase will be necessary to evaluate the site's eligibility for the National Register.

The present survey also established that archaeological sites 41BX109 and 41BX113, lie within the North Point Subdivision property. While these were not of immediate concern, they were further examined. Both are localities where prehistoric people procured chert for stone tools, with thin scatters of chipped stone residue marking the locations of both sites. A previously unrecorded burned rock midden was discovered at 41BX109, however. This midden, which had been partly vandalized, lies just beyond the North Pointe Subdivision property line and will not be impacted by the subdivision development. No further archaeological work is recommended at these sites.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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FIGURES

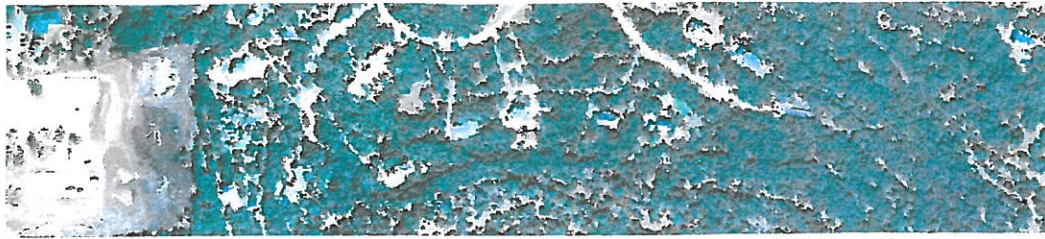


IMAGE RESTRICTED



Figure 1. Map of North Pointe Subdivision property showing the locations of site 41BX106, 41BX109, and 41BX113 and burned rock middens at 41BX106 and 41BX109 (map provided by Frost GeoSciences, Inc.).

IMAGE RESTRICTED

Figure 2. View of 41BX106 midden from the west



IMAGE RESTRICTED

Figure 3. Rock alignment on northeast side of 41BX106 midden



Figure 4. Rock alignments on northeast side of 41BX106 midden.